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MICHAEL the LION of ERGAKUK



by
W.B. BURROWS



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Michael the Lion of Ergakuk

Michael the Lion's Adventures with Jo the White Man

NOW Michael the Lion lived in a cave,
Beside a high hill, and he was so brave
He dared dwell near a path that ran right down
To an African spot, Ergakuk town;
Many huts stood beside the wide river,
Where crocodiles made the children shiver.

The natives wished for a store up-to-date,
So wrote to Jo Dawling of New York State;
When reply came Michael nosed around near,
With his great big paw behind his right ear;
He harked; they said, "Jo is coming ahead,"
He would eat him all as he slept in bed.



MICHAEL hid himself down by the river,
His eyes through the thicket peering ever;
At last Jo appeared. O joy! He was fat!
And Michael wagged his great tail like a cat.
To dear Ergakuk at dawn he would go,
Run over to the hut and eat up Jo.

At early dawn Michael stealthily crept
To the little hut where the white man slept;
Oh my, but the water dripped from his tongue,
As he looked at Jo's legs, both fresh and young;
He bit off one leg close up to the knee;
Jo's black said: "I'm glad he did not bite me."

Jo exclaimed "Ouch," and the pain to allay
Natives plastered his knee with mud and clay;
When the stump was healed he sent down the Nile,
For a wooden leg of African style;
He then made one, while at leisure one day,
Of hardest wood, with which Michael could play.



THE next time Michael felt an aching void
He thought of the leg he had first enjoyed;
So early next day he came to the camp;
Jo's leg lay temptingly out in the damp;
He bit; it was oiled; he gobbled it whole;
T'was the wooden leg with a rubber sole.

Jo sprang up and put on his Sunday limb,
Waked friends he knew would gratify his whim;
Bonfires were started before Michael's den,
Who ran forth, ran back, like a cat from a hen;
They lassoed his paws and bound his loose hide,
To Ergakuk hauled, the leg rode inside.

THEY took him on a raft and went to sea,
The Ergakukians paddling care-free;
The river was boiling, the sea was rough;
Michael was sea-sick, oh, more than enough;
“Is the moon coming up?” the natives asked.
“Jo’s leg,” said Michael, “is coming up fast.”

It did. Then Joe fed him a large stuffed fish,
The natives used for a pillow. Michael growled, “Pish!”
Thus they swept on to the boisterous sea,
Now slopping, sloping, then slipping on lee;
On high wave they sang out, “Heave ho, heave ho!”
And tossed down Michael to the sharks below.

Whale Swallows Michael

MICHAEL dropped into the mouth of a Whale,
Then was swallowed entire from head to tail;
The stomach of the Whale felt instant pain,
Sad tidings of woe he flashed o'er the main;
Michael within pricked like revolving pin,
Whilst crowd of small fish watched the fun with a grin.

The Whale said to Michael, "Oh how you cling!
Roll yourself small and I'll give you a fling."
He beat the waves and raised a commotion;
Michael came up head first to the ocean.
He swam with long strokes to the sundown shore,
Climbed the steep hills and sent forth happy roar.

At sunrise Michael on path near his cave
To Jo passing by a wicked smirk gave.
"Lovely weather we're having," Michael said.
"Oh fair," Jo answered, "I thought you were dead.
Didn't you meet the sharks and enjoy a bite?
You must try my tropical dynamite."



Monkey and Elephant Join Michael

MICHAEL decided to new cave to trek;
That night, while he slept like a perfect wreck,
Came Jo's pet Monkey with red pepper can;
Peppered him freely, then away he ran:
His beauteous lair was filled with hot air,
The moment he started to comb his hair.

The natives determined to have some fun.
They advised with Jo, then went on the run,
Tied up Michael, bound him ever so tight,
On his tan hide painted in letters white:
“Jo's Store, Ergakuk, Try Tropical Tea.”
A fat black laughed so he fell to the lea.

They had also clasped round his mane, in game,
A leather collar not having his name.
Instead was alarm clock of dire design,
The ten-day kind, with a click-clack malign,
Set to go off daily, nightly, at three;
It whirred and Michael sang up in “High E.”



MICHAEL ate through the ropes—new way to dine;—
Across the desert he took a bee line,
Ran to an oasis with high date tree;
On the uppermost branch was Jo's Monkey,
Who slung down stones as the Lion drew near;
“Wait and watch,” said Michael. “I'll bite your ear.”



TO the oasis trumpeting a shout,
Chased by some camel-riders, strong and stout,
Dust flying, sweat pouring, whooping the whoop,
Raced George, the Elephant, fleeing the loop;
He read on Michael: “Try Tropical Tea,”
Then shook up the ground with elephant’s glee.



THHEREWITH the alarm clock went off alone,
And rang up blue terror which thrilled the bone;
In one short moment, with leaps and a yell,
They hurried for timber and speeded right well.
They camped on the moss-covered bank of a brook;
Appetizing fish from the stream they took.

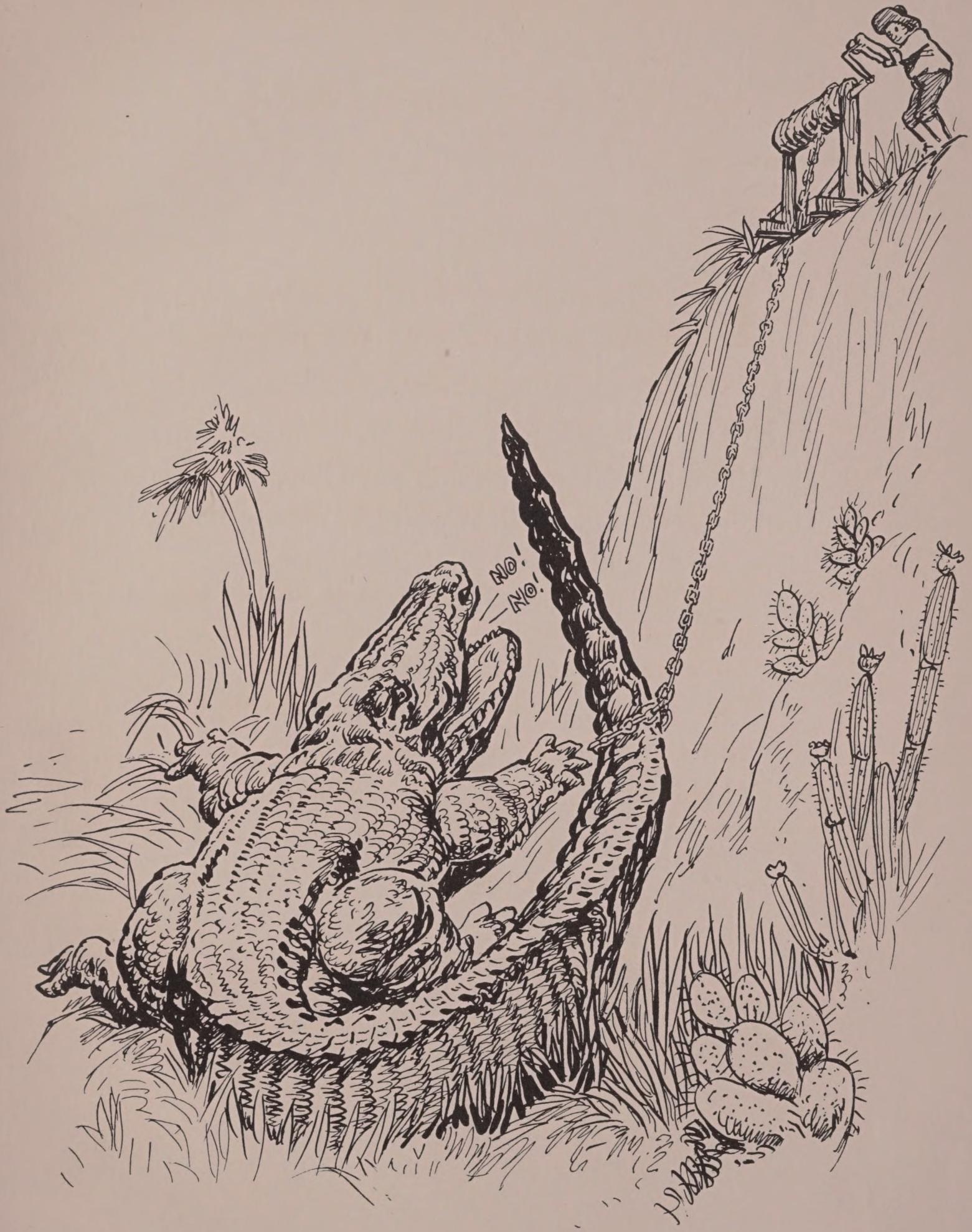
In the night the Monkey away would skip,
Michael held him tight in leonine grip;
Bit his little ear, with a dainty bite,
Made him gnaw off leather collar so tight;
Then Michael said, "Throw the clock in the sea.
Now crinkle your toe, and climb up a tree."



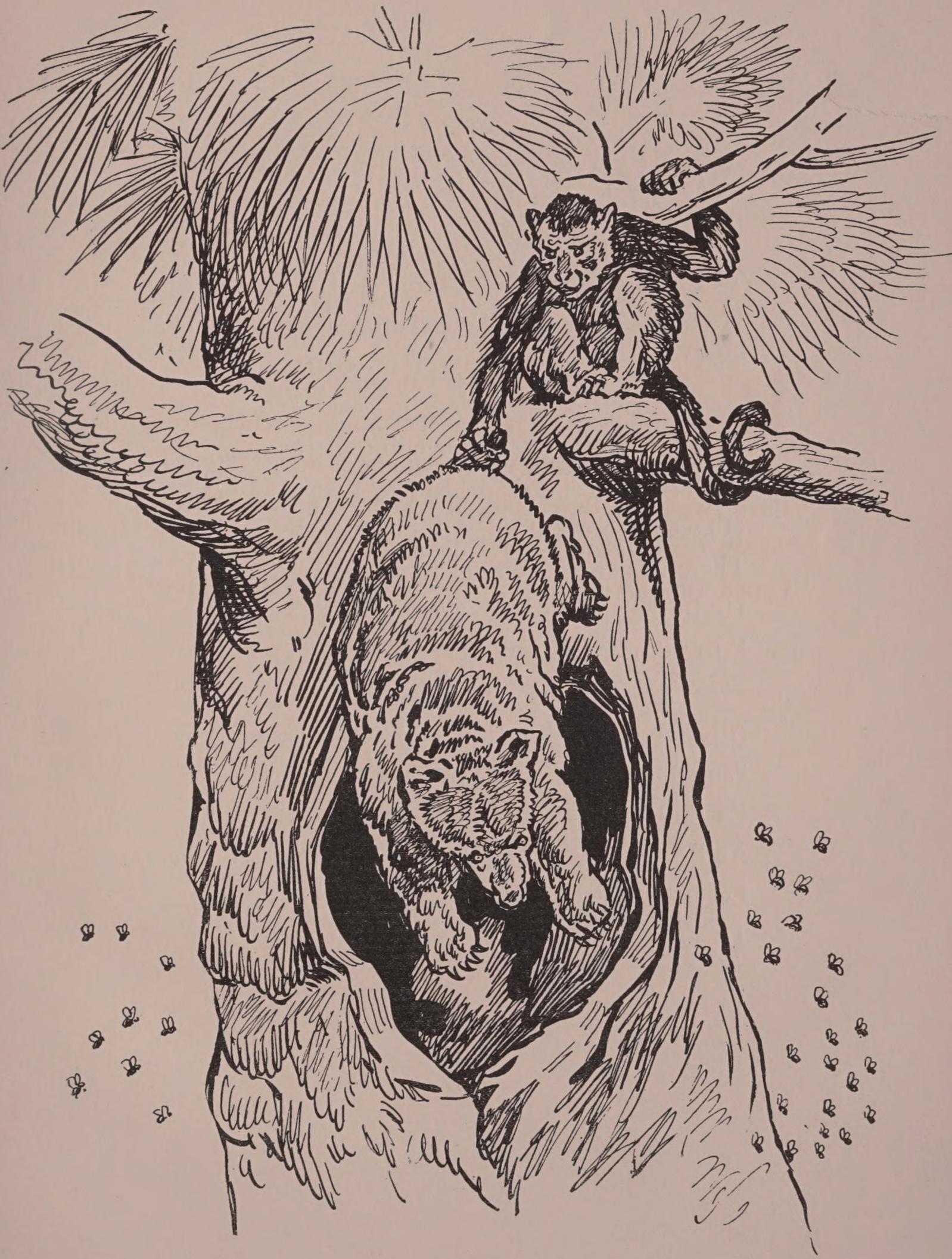
New York Boy Catches Crocodile

FROM Greater New York a lad there had come
To catch a Crocodile to take back home;
He chained a fine one as you link a cuff,
Led chain to the windlass up on a bluff;
Began to draw, the Crocodile in tow,
Thumping and bumping, was yelling: "No, no!"

The windlass locked tight, he hung high in air,
Some natives came and painted on him there,
"Jo's Store, Ergakuk, Try Tropical Tea."
The sailormen laughed and crooked the left knee;
All went, the chain broke, he fell on his tail.
"I will hie," he said, "like a sandy gale."



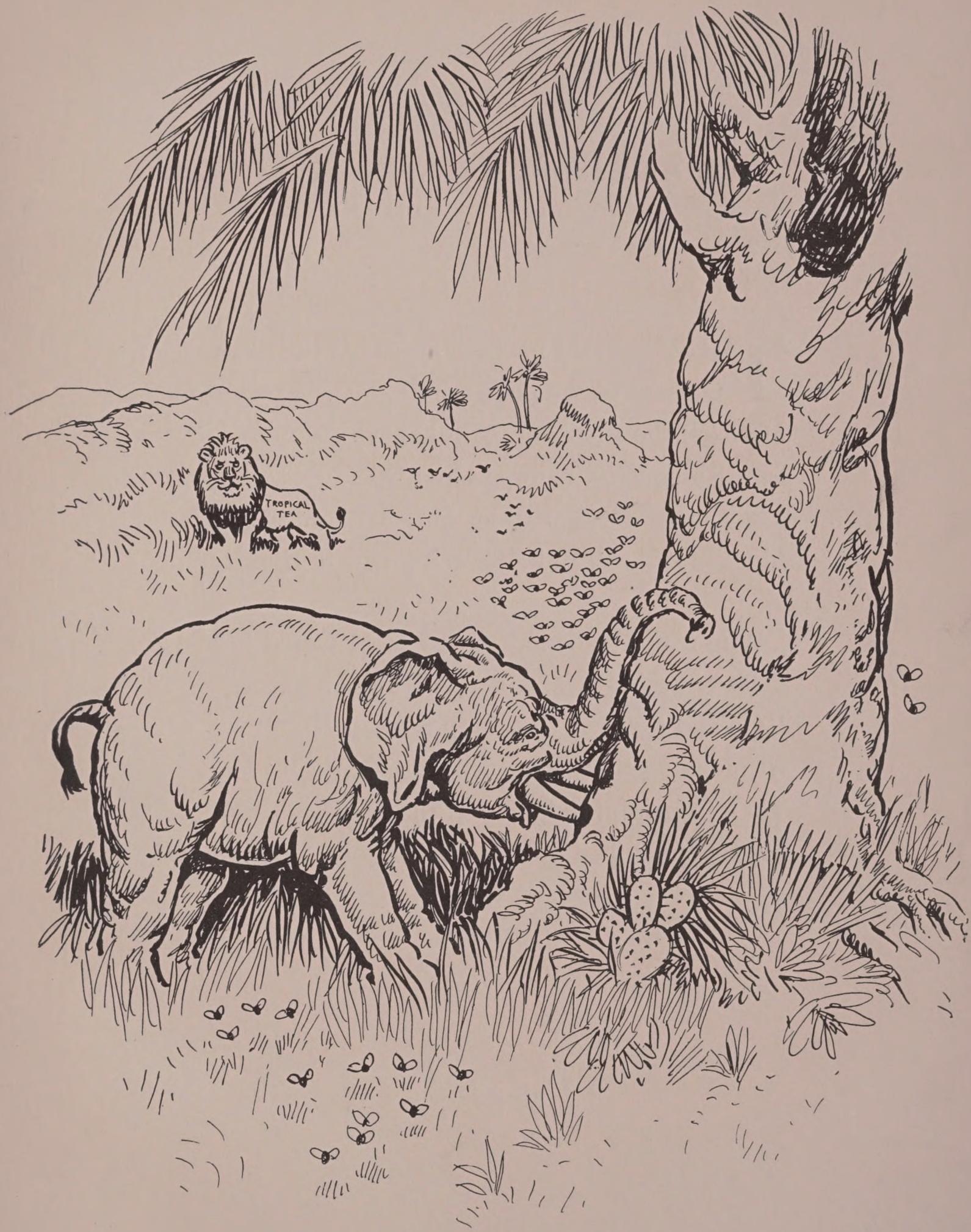
BY Michael's camp Ceylon Bear came along,
To climb hollow tree, where honey smelled strong.
The Monkey goes too, with skip and a hop,
Then twists the Bear's tail, at which he growls, "Stop."
"Don't twist again," said the Bear, but he does.
Down went the Bear, whilst the bees cried: "Buzz, buzz!"



WITH ivory tusk the Elephant bored
Holes in the tree where the Bear was stored.
He pushed the tree over, his muscles were wrung;
The Bear scrambled out, stung well and well stung;
He too joined with Michael after repairs,
Tickled to escape joining his forebears.

Jo sauntered by one hot evening in June
With fireworks, crackers to play them a tune;
He set them off in the tall, green grass;
There was crack after crack, alas! alas!
Up in the air in red fireworks they see:
“Jo’s Store, Ergakuk, Try Tropical Tea.”

All were badly scared, some were quivering.
Sam Rhinoceros came up shivering.
“I know a cave with underground river.
And there,” said he, “the white man comes never.
Let us speed away from Tropical Jo
To a sweet little spot where life is slow.”



Animal Band Treks to New Cave

THEY were off next day, through the silent wood,
On trek to the place where the new cave stood.
Michael, the Elephant, Monkey with smile,
Sam Rhinoceros, painted Crocodile,
The Ceylon Bear, with his nose flat and queer;
Michael said, "Hush," placing paw to right ear.

"Who is now cawing, 'caw, caw' I would know?"
"That," said the Monkey, "is Indian Crow."
"Go and pull two of his tail feathers out."
At plucking the Crow gave a quick, shrill shout,
Then in painful huff clawed the Monkey's tail;
Matters smoothed down when he joined on the trail.



ON a level space, when Michael felt fit
A contest he set, 'twas the game of "It."
All raced with speed, but Michael went too quick;
Then a stone in the way gave his paw a lick;
He picked up the stone; with violent throw
Hit Hippopotamus watching the show.

"Hey, that's a fine shot," but Michael was "It."
The Hippo was mad and waddled a bit;
To Elephant glided, then slipped under,
Hoisted George, who ascended in wonder,
With thud and amazement dropped on the sand;
Hippo lisped to Michael, "Oh, wasn't it grand?"



NEXT noon, while in deep wood they were walking
Michael said, "Hist," and they stopped all talking.

Far up at rest was an aerial raft,
Jo aboard, keg of molasses abaft;
It was leaking down a sugary stream;
The Bear opened his mouth: "Oh, what a dream!"

In the night the raft showed clear, high and bright,
Electric letters displaying alight:
"Jo's Store, Ergakuk, Try Tropical Tea."
Said Michael, "Far is our journey to be.
The Lion's days in this land are over,
For the white man walks in luck and clover."

Beside the way stood a mountainous peak.
The Monkey rushed up to twist Eaglet's beak;
The Eagle took him in his talons, rose,
And hurled him at Mr. Crocodile's nose;
"It's all in fun," said Michael, "come and join,"
So the Eagle flew down like spinning coin.



THE Crocodile twice at the Monkey bit;
Rhinoceros clapped him in a deep pit.
He wept tears as large as a new baseball,
Bawled, yelled and cried, then for Michael did call;
To the Elephant, Michael said, "Go back.
Lift Crocodile out and whack him a whack."

The Crocodile's tears were changed to a smile,
Gazing down the road at animal style,
"Will you look," he said, "at that spotted tike,
De Puyster Giraffe coming down the pike?"
De Puyster bowed low, chatted about Fame,
Studies in wandering, dwelt on his name.

He too joined with Michael. Then they all said:
"It's our last day out. Let's play we're all dead."
They were all so tired that they slept and slept;
The Crow dreamt of time when Crocodile wept;
They awoke fresh and bright, then spick and span,
They reached the new cave—it was old as Ann.



Fun in Cave

MICHAEL and Sam Rhinoceros had talk,
Noted the cavern with its sides like chalk.
Far in from the entrance there was a brink;
Down the ledge at one side they went to drink.
They drank at the river which rushed below;
The water was fresh as from rill in the snow.

A WAY there was by the stream on the right;
For miles they walked toward a distant light.
An opening there led out to the sea,
Great rock in the center; the stream curved free.
Encircling the rock it began to surge,
And mountain waters in the sea to merge.

Returning to the cave where they conferred,
Michael's mischievous grin with joy Sam stirred.
All would have fun, both joyous and happy;
Of course there were some would be quite snappy;
Each should be pushed to underground river,
Get sopping wet and begin to shiver.

THE Bear came first, led by Michael and Sam;
While all were chaffing they began to jam;
Squeezed and pushed him over edge of the cave,
Down twenty feet to a watery grave.
The river tossed, wetted, shocked him with shock,
Like express it bore him to entrance rock.

At last the quick river whirled to the right,
And sent him to sea, almost dead with fright.
With vim it hurled him on the breakers nigh;
He pawed and the salt he shook from his eye.
In a moment he reached the sandy beach;
Trekked all through the night, startled at a screech.

There was fun with Hippo when George, "with love,"
Thrust him to river with rancorous shove.
De Puyster slid in with éclat and pose;
The Crocodile came home nursing his nose;
The Eagle pushed, screeched: "What is the matter?"
But the river's roar drowned further chatter.



The Yellow Yacht

ALL were up on the point of a mountain top,
A They gazed down below far as one could drop.
A yellow-striped yacht from the sea there came;
Ashore went hunters of African game.
There were automobiles and aeroplanes,
Blooded horses saddled, tossing their manes.

The yachters went inland to hunt and stew,
Leaving ship in charge of two of the crew,
Who talked of hunting, shirking their work;
When Michael o'erheard he began to chirk.
He sent happy word to each of the band:
“In yacht we will go to Amazon land.”

Mistress Bear in red cloak of brightest hue
Picked up on veldt after yachters went through,
Came on the boat with little Willie Bear;
Mistress Lion and Pik were almost there;
Mistress Lion a hat of black straw wore down,
Two rows of red feathers circling the crown.



THEY stood at the rail and began to chat,
When De Puyster Giraffe in high white hat
Saluted with: "Charming sea and nice day,"
Pik and little Willie were both at play.
Pik told Willie of his pa and the Whale;
Willie was jealous, rapped Pik on the tail.

Mistress Lion gave Pik cuff on the nose,
Then started anew the talk about clothes;
George and Madam Elephant now passed in,
Wearing shawls of red plaid, held by gold pin.
They bowed almost double—spoke of a trunk.
The joke made all wish Noah's ark had sunk.

In a flame-colored coat buttoned up tight,
Cap of same color, with smile quick and bright,
Leaped Jo, the Monkey, to sit in the game.
"Good morning, honey. I'm so glad I came."
To Mistress Bear pointed this chaff so gay.
She was so flustered that she said, "Hey, hey."

HIPPO swung in with a ponderous smile,
A red velvet carpet decked him in style.
Ceylon Bear came wearing large derby hat,
Red ribbon surrounding, and one white spat.
Michael came on with dress suit and pink vest;
On Michael's tail the swallowtail did rest.

Sam Rhinoceros moved on down the slide,
With stone-boat of pigs and honey beside.
He wore beautiful coat of khaki cloth;
In a short jiffy had thrown the freight off.
The Crocodile came with "panama straw,"
Then Mistress Eagle and Eagle-in-law.

Tawny Eagle came now with his son Sam.
An ostrich hopped on ere the gate did slam.
Said Michael: "The Eagle flies high, sees most.
He shall be Captain and fill the great post.
Elephant to coal and Bear, engineer;
De Puyster Giraffe at the wheel will steer.

“THE Monkey on watch to look out for wrecks;
 Sam Rhinoceros to holystone decks;
Hippo—the steward, and Crocodile—cook;”
Just then Pik Lion ostrich feather took;
“All aboard!” they danced, waved their paws and cheered,
“We’re off!” The yacht for the Amazon cleared.

As the yacht stood to sea the two men run
Quickly to the shore, each eating a bun.
“Hi there,” “I say,” flitted to yacht so near;
Captain placed talon behind his right ear.
For dinner they had pigs, coffee and bread,
“In South we’ll pick coffee,” Mistress Bear said.

The crew of the ship were new to their work;
Thus the yacht went up and down with a jerk.
They decided to take a little rest
And study yachting at its very best:
Then they slipped the anchor over the rail.
Like hook it caught in the tail of the Whale.



The coloring done by Sophie Marston Brannan

THEY hoisted the Whale so dank and so cold,
And dropped him to tank far down in the hold.
With an awful flop the swallower sank,
For his dilemma he must surely thank
That fateful old Lion of Ergakuk,
Who would cut him up like leaves of a book.

Michael went down to interview the Whale.
Deeply regretted the harm to his tail,
Spoke of his last visit, wonderful hop,
Said: "This swallowing business ought to stop;"
The Whale replied: "We are swallowers all,
From the water up. I'm pleased at your call."

After they had started with whistles and toots
One said: "Where's the Crow?" Just then in he shoots.
A ring with diamond on his arched neck,
An exquisite one without flaw or speck.
He bowed and said, with contagious "Caw, caw:"
"Some girl will be shy a mother-in-law."



A CAPTAIN standing on bridge of warship
Levelled his glass to where the sky did dip.
“An eagle, a lion and a giraffe
Are running that yacht,” he said with a laugh.
“There is no rule laid down that bears thereon;
It may be I’m dreaming; I will pass on.”

“Bear overboard” and then there was flurry.
From davits they slipped the boat in a hurry.
Michael grasped with strong limbs the ready oars;
Rowed swiftly away on the sea, with roars;
Grabbed little Willie Bear hugging the jaw
Of a shark who would take him to his maw.

The Amazon’s mouth was crossed at high tide.
Think of a river’s mouth fifty miles wide!
They went up the river thousands of miles;
Anchored the yacht and went ashore with smiles.
It was the perfect land in which to roam,
On plateau was cave, in shape like a dome.



Jaunt of Sam Eagle in Airship from the Amazon to Africa

IN youthful folly Sam Eagle took jaunt,
A hundred miles south to beautiful haunt.
On that day an airship chanced to be there.
He flew on. It started, gave him a scare.
Rushed on through the clouds and over the sea,
And dropped in Africa in time for tea.

An expedition to Africa went,
By a circus in South America sent
To collect animals fine, rare and wild.
Sam was captured like veritable child.
Away on trip south he started once more
In cage unshut, they had failed to lock door.

He saw wild animals captive about,
Eating their meals with a mien fierce and stout.
On each was painted, with woe observed he:
“Jo’s Store, Ergakuk, Try Tropical Tea.”
He was told that Jo, now rich as a Pharaoh,
Had painted lions from Cape to Cairo.



DIRECTLY opposite the Amazon
His cage door Sam opened, flew out, flew on;
With joy he fluttered, the shore he knew well.
Days thence saw Bear breasting in punt the swell,
Who grunted welcome, invited him in;
Mistress Eagle from dome saw Sam so thin.

“It’s Sammy, it’s Sam,” she cried in delight,
While she flew to the boat with a whir so light.
Sam was much pleased to be at home once more.
They made delicious feast with great furore;
That night in the dome Sam making his bow
Spoke on “Africa as it was and now.”



BESIDE the Amazon they lived many years.
Used ostrich feathers to wipe away tears.
Liked to have their coffee both strong and black.
De Puyster ate leaves, loved his lips to smack.
The owner of the yacht can have the same
By sending Michael, the Lion, his name.





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